



# Operation RIO Update

12 December 2003

Task order 6 provides funds to build a pipeline under the river to replace damaged pipelines at the al Fattah bridge.

Army Corps of Engineers Photo.

*An update for all SWD employees and Operation RIO volunteers supporting Operation Iraqi Freedom.*

**Nation at War:** The Army is preparing to enter one of the most demanding periods in its modern history as it deploys forces to support Operation Iraqi Freedom 2 (OIF), Operation Enduring Freedom 5 (OEF), and Operation Enduring Freedom - Horn of Africa. A large majority of its ten active component divisions will be on the move early next year. Tens of thousands of Reserve Component personnel will be mobilized in addition to the approximately 130,000 currently on active duty. Every component and MACOM in the Army, including USACE, will have a critical role to play in ensuring the Army executes the OIF/OEF rotation plans successfully. The Army will also execute Stabilization Force (Bosnia), Kosovo Force (Kosovo), and Multinational Forward Observer (Sinai) mission rotations during this time. Despite this monumental task, the Army must also remain focused on other global requirements and contingencies around the world.

**Mission Update:** RIO/GRD The new Div is now officially named the "Gulf Region Division" (GRD). The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers has been providing contingency engineering support to the combatant command through the deployment of Field Force Engineering (FFE) teams to operations in Iraq since February 2003. Of course, you are all familiar with Southwestern Division's significant contribution to this effort with the fielding of Task Force Restore Iraqi Oil (TF RIO). TF RIO has been supported by over 201 USACE personnel, both military and civilian, from 26 USACE organizations and five outside agencies (DOE, USMC, USAF, DCAA, and Titan Corp). What you may not be aware of are the various other Forward Engineer Support Teams - Augmentation (FEST-A) that are supporting the Coalition Provisional Authority (CPA) and the various combatant Divisions in Iraq. Because of the potential for duplication of staff and effort in some of these teams, the Chief of Engineers has directed the planning for and transition to a provisional USACE Division in Iraq. That Division will be known as the Gulf Region Division (Provisional) or GRD. The GRD will be organized as a Division Headquarters with three subordinate Districts and will be operational prior to the Transfer of Authority between V Corps and its replacement in early 2004. The recent approval of the DoD Supplemental funding bill will require USACE to organize to provide additional support to the CPA's reconstruction efforts and CJTF-7's US forces bed-down requirements. This transition shifts USACE support from FFE to a more traditional USACE operation.

Many USACE Divisions will play critical roles in ensuring the success of the Gulf Region Division. Southwestern Division will continue to provide manning support within the GRD relating to the oil support mission. We will also provide reach-back and contract support for the oil mission as well as augment Northwestern Division and Lakes and Rivers Division in the northern and southern Districts, respectively, in support of the oil mission.

**DCAA Audit:** There is a great deal of media coverage about a draft DCAA audit concerning the RIO fuel import mission. Normally we would not discuss a draft audit report because a draft report is just that, a draft report. The process allows a company to provide the auditor with additional information or justification for the actions in question. Discussing a draft report in public would

needlessly sully a company's reputation. It is our intention to let the process work. That is, we will wait for KBR to provide additional documentation to the auditor and wait for the final report before commenting. No one is disputing that KBR provided an urgently needed service to the Coalition Provisional Authority to prevent a civil uprising because of fuel shortages. No one is disputing that Kuwait provided the Armed Forces with donated aviation fuel and assisted KBR and the Corps in acquiring the necessary export licenses and sub-contractors to transport the fuel from Kuwait to Iraq. What is in dispute is whether or not all of the necessary paperwork is properly filed to document the sub-contracting process and whether or not due diligence was used to assure the fuel was procured at the lowest possible price. TF-RIO personnel are asked to let the audit process work and not comment until the report is final. The audit process is a useful tool to help the Corps manage contracts as complex as this one in a very hostile environment. The RIO staff in Baghdad and Dallas are making sure pertinent facts are revealed, lessons learned are recorded and plan to share any lessons learned to help the Corps continuously improve our contract management procedures.

### **A view from down range: Sue Buring**

Article and photo by Alan Dooley

Little Rock District Property Disposal Officer Sue Buring, has completed a four month tour of duty in Kuwait and Iraq. She served there with the U. S. Army Task Force RIO (Restore Iraqi Oil). There, she said, "My main purpose was to support our people in the field-to enable them to do their work."



Buring-a 14 year Corps employee-has been part of a U. S. Army Corps of Engineers mission to restore the prewar capability of the Iraqi Oil Industry, which underpins the entire Iraqi economy by providing more than 95% of the nation's foreign exchange by exporting crude oil overseas.

When asked why she volunteered for the assignment to the former war zone, Buring responded, "I wanted the experience. I wanted to be challenged to do things I have never done before. And I wanted to be part of the team."

She has accomplished all three goals.

"I haven't had a chance to travel much over here, and that's a disappointment," she noted. "But I lived in Kuwait on the Camp Doha Army Base and in Baghdad, Iraq. I ate my meals in Saddam's former presidential palace. Besides, my job is to support our people throughout Iraq, and that requires me to stay close to my desk."

"I was sent here as property book officer, but here I have also been a Logistics Support Specialist. I've been able to do things I would have never imagined back at home. I now know more about what I can do, as opposed to simply staying in my comfort zone, doing the same thing all the time."

"Most importantly to me, I've definitely been part of the team." Then she modestly noted, "My role has been small, but I've been a part none-the-less."

During her interview, sitting near the west bank of the Tigris River in Baghdad, Buring was quick to reply to the question of whether she would recommend here mission to someone else. "Highly. I'd recommend it highly. This has been an opportunity to be part of and support a really historic mission," Buring said.

Moving to what she has gained from the experience, Buring said, "It has been brought home to me how important my family and friends are. It is easy to take these kind of things for granted when they are so easily accessible every day. If I have to any extent in the past, I sure won't take them for granted ever again."



Grinning, Sue also said: "I've sometimes been somewhat of a procrastinator. But I could not do that here or the work would overwhelm me. This has been a good opportunity to correct that."

Awaiting Buring at home are her husband Steve and the family dog O'Malley. Her mother Mary Lou Jenkins, who lives in Texas is also eagerly anticipating her return.

Then she said that she and Steve would head out for some quiet time on their houseboat on Lake Ouachita. "We stay there as much as we stay at the house. It is our home away from home."

"I don't have any big plans. Maybe we'll just chill. I haven't had a lot of quiet time here in Iraq and Kuwait; along with Steve, that is my first priority. I asked that nobody make big plans for my return. I just want to ease back into life for a couple of weeks before returning to work, Buring said."

As she ends her four month stint of 14 hour days – seven of them a week – Sue Buring has earned a break to do as she pleases for a while. "I feel like I have moved every thing we own here, several times. I've spent so much time loading and unloading it that they call me the "Conex Queen," she laughed.



**"HOOAH!!!"**

*Robert Crear, Brigadier General, USA  
Commander,  
Southwestern Division*